

1) ePaper

I'm going to refer to my first idea as “ePaper.” Essentially, ePaper works on basic, inexpensive, readily-available technology. The idea of ePaper is to hand someone a paper document, such as a small slip of paper or a business card, and have that document link to a digital document or website through a centralized online database.

The paper (or plastic) documents will have a magnetic strip on the very bottom, almost exactly like disposable public-transit cards they use for the subway in DC or NYC, and even on the buses here in Utica. Going hand-in-hand with the ePaper documents are ePaper scanners. The hope is that these could be very tiny USB or Bluetooth devices. Their small size is why the magnetic strips would be on the very bottom of the cards they read (so the cards won't need to be inserted far into the devices).

One way for the system to work would be to have people or organizations issuing the ePaper documents tell the provider which document they would like to link from, possibly by scanning that ePaper document, which would have already had a (random?) serial number on it, then telling the provider what that serial number is supposed to be, what it is supposed to link to. These serial numbers could either be documents specifically uploaded to the server, or links to documents or engines elsewhere on the internet.

Admittedly, this idea is a gimmick. But so are spring-loaded umbrellas. I can't tell you how many e-mails I sent to a kevn.wilk@gmail.com, when it was supposed to be kevin.wilk@gmail.com. Also, when I get a U.S. Postal Service Delivery Confirmation Receipt, I think it's archaic that I need to correctly type the 20-digit code into their website. I think it would be kick-ass to hand someone a business card and have it directly link to, say, an mp3, website, or to my facebook profile. Maybe they could have a portable wireless device that interfaces with their smartphone. I hand someone my card, they slide it through a small device on their keychain, then my number is in their phone.

2) Bluetooth Social

“Live Blue Social” is a real-time social networking website / application. Class 1 Bluetooth devices can transmit information at distances of up to 100 meters (wikipedia). The idea is that subscribers to Live Blue Social will have Bluetooth devices that will send and receive short-distance beacons to and from other Bluetooth devices belonging to subscribers of the same service. This is a

social networking system where users can view each others' profiles based on their physical proximity. "Person A" signs up for the service, has a Bluetooth beacon sender/detector, and can see the profile of "Person B" and "Person C" who each have done the same and are within, say, 100 meters of each other..

The idea of this service is to help with the first social encounter. Instead of, say, a guy going up to a girl and saying "Wow, you're smoking hot; tell me about yourself," individuals could introduce themselves based on shared interests. Perhaps there are two people who share a passion for Rugby, or Japanese Film, or anything else. They can start a conversation already knowing each other.

It can be awkward talking to someone one-on-one without knowing anything about them. But if you have little or no mutual friends, this is often the case. Further, there are many people one comes into close proximity with to on a given night with whom one would be able to have interesting interactions; if only the two parties knew more basic information about each other.

3) eltinrary

eltinrary is a robotic itinerary program that generates (with a degree of randomness) itineraries for people in own home towns or when they are traveling. Essentially, eltinrary has a large volume of local business and institution hours and event times. It also has prices associated with events. It would, of course, also need a maps program capable of determining travel times.

The user would sign up, give their location, enter in the space of time they want to fill, submit some preferences, and a computer would generate an itinerary. The user could either have the computer take another stab at the itinerary, looking at how the randomness effects the appeal of the next itinerary, or tweak and modify the itinerary provided.

This website would be a sort of synthesis of google maps, yelp, and StubHub. It's such a big task when going to a city such as NYC and trying to generate your own itinerary. Personally, I just want to do something. I don't want to spend 2 hours trying to put one day's itinerary together with maps and travel times and such. I don't care if it's random. Further, it could use Pandora and Netflix-like user-ratings of items to help with determining user tastes and preferences. Also, people might simply be able to follow itineraries that are completely person-generated.

I think StubHub is asinine for not seriously considering my suggestion that they allow users to search across all events by price (in addition to time and locale). Really. Sometimes I just want to kill a couple hours with \$20. I don't give a shit if it's theater, a sporting event, music, comedy, or whatever.

4) iJam

I think Pandora's Music Genome Project has the right idea. Music is analyzed by attributes, 150 or more genes (wikipedia).

“To create a song's genome, it is analyzed by a musician in a process that takes 20 to 30 minutes per song” (wikipedia). That's the catch. Why is it necessary to have a human manually analyze the song's attributes? It seems as though a computer could easily do this. I've looked at many waveforms, and it's not too hard to literally “see” basically what's going on for a given sound file.

So, at this point, we basically have a more efficient version of Pandora. So what? Well, if we have computers analyzing the music, why not also generating the music? Yes, artificial intelligence music generation. It will eventually happen. I assume it's possible today, and I think it could easily produce pretty good music. I've already mentioned this idea to an IT professional, and he didn't like it, but there's more...

If Mike Brown and I said, “Wow, this Playstation game called *Frequency* would be pretty cool if we had a ground mat in place of a normal controller,” we would be millionaires (*Dance Revolution*). Then, we all had the opportunity to say “These ground mats would be cooler if they were shaped like instruments” (*Guitar Hero / RockBand*). But I think there's a logical conclusion to all this, and that's iJam.

If people were musically talented, they be more prone to play real instruments than current videogame instrument-shaped controllers. But I think that if normal people, with the help of technology, could pick up instruments that were not just props, but actual instruments that generated original music it would be wildly popular.

For example, we already have pitch-shift / pitch-perfecter / Auto Tuner used by musicians. Why not in a futuristic Karaoke machine? But iJam is not a Karaoke machine at all. It's music generated by artificial intelligence based on what the computer think the users want to sound like. The “players” or “musicians” manipulate the parameters for the sound being generated in real-time by continually putting input into their mock-instruments. And of course they'd be made to all harmonize with each other, at least to an extent. I don't want too fancy with this whole idea, but EEG technology could possibly be integrated in a higher-end version to help the machine better read the users and coordinate them with each other.